

Statement from Executive Director Brad Livingston

The House Appropriations Committee's funding decisions for Texas Department of Criminal Justice (TDCJ) were recently adopted for the FY 2016-17 biennium and will be submitted for full House consideration next week. I want to emphasize that until such time as the appropriations bill is approved by the governor, all decisions are preliminary and subject to change.

In January 2015, when HB1/SB2 were first introduced, this bill provided funding at the FY2014-15 operational levels with the exception of certain capital expenditures. During the last few months, we have worked closely with the committee members considering our requests for additional items of policy and operational significance. We are especially grateful for the committee's decisions regarding employee salaries and retirement funding. We will continue to work with all members of the legislature and the Governor's Office to ensure they have accurate information regarding the impact of various decisions on operations and staff.

PROBATION:

- Provides funding levels for felony and misdemeanor probation supervision based on the LBB February 2015 population projections along with an additional \$12.0 million.
- Fully funds CSCD Health Insurance at anticipated FY 2016-17 levels.
- Maintains funding for the probation treatment/diversion programs, community corrections programs and the Treatment Alternatives to Incarceration Program at the FY 2014-15 levels.

TCOOMMI:

- Maintains current funding levels for mental health services and continuity of care for offenders and provides \$6.0 million in additional funding for the expansion of mental health services.

INCARCERATION & TREATMENT:

- Maintains staffing and funding for operational areas within the incarceration function (such as correctional officers, unit support staff, utilities, maintenance, agriculture, privately operated facilities, substance abuse treatment, academic/vocational training, and rehabilitation and reentry programs) at current funding levels.
- Provides funding for an additional 50 reentry transitional coordinators.
- Restores funding [\$10.0 million] for the purchase of comprehensive video surveillance systems.
- Provides funding for an additional 500 DWI treatment slots.
- Provides funding for offender Unit Care, Hospital Care, and Pharmacy at the FY 2014-15 appropriated levels and provides \$84.9 million to bring the FY 2016-17 funding to the projected level of expense for services currently provided.

PAROLE:

- Provides staffing and funding for parole supervision based on the LBB February 2015 population projections and maintains current operational levels for halfway house and intermediate sanction facility beds.
- Provides funding for an additional 150 halfway house beds and treatment on all intermediate sanction facilities beds.

OTHER AGENCY FUNCTIONS:

- Provides \$60.0 million for the agency's major repair and renovation efforts to maintain our existing physical plant totaling over 100 correctional facilities statewide.
- Maintains staffing and funding levels for all other administrative and support functions (such as Central Administration, Information Technology, Office of Inspector General, State Counsel for Offenders, and Health Services).
- Provides funding for Information Resources data center services based on the estimates provided by the Department of Information Resources (DIR).

SALARY INCREASE AND RETIREMENT FUNDING:

- Provides funding for a 10% salary increase for correctional officers, correctional laundry and food service managers, ranking correctional officers, and parole officers.
- Provides funding to make the state employee retirement fund actuarially sound (appropriation to Employee Retirement System). Additional statutory changes would increase the state's contribution to 9.5%, and increase the employees' contribution to 9.5% (LECOS positions to 10.0%). To offset this increase to employees' retirement contribution, the House Appropriations Committee provides funding for a 2.5% across-the-board pay raise to all state employees.